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**MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION CALLS ATTENTION TO
LIFELINE AWARENESS WEEK**

**Assistance with telephone charges is available
to help low-income customers stay connected**

ST. PAUL, Minn. – “In today’s society everyone should have access to an affordable, basic level of telephone service in order to meet essential, and in some cases, emergency needs,” says Chair of the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, Beverly Jones Heydinger.

Access to local emergency services and community resources is vital to low-income and elderly residents. The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) wants Minnesota residents to “stay connected” and is reaching out to those who need phone service but can’t afford it. Governor Mark Dayton issued a Proclamation on August 26th declaring the week of September 9 – 15, 2013 as Lifeline Awareness Week in Minnesota. During this week, the PUC will promote the Lifeline Program which offers discounts to help residents have access to basic local telephone service.

Under the federal Lifeline program, telephone customers who participate in or are eligible for certain assistance programs are able to receive a basic telephone service discount. This discount is in the form of a credit for \$9.25 per month on traditional phone plans or 250 free minutes on participating pre-paid cellular phones.

To apply for benefits contact your local landline or cellular telephone company or the PUC. The PUC can be reached at (651) 296-0406, (800) 657-3782, consumer.puc@state.mn.us, or visit the website at www.puc.state.mn.us.